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# America

*January 15, 1955*

*Vol. 92, Number 16*

NATIONAL CATHOLIC WEEKLY REVIEW

## Scrabble on Madison Avenue

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THURSTON N. DAVIS

## Some sociologists out of bounds

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GORDON GEORGE

## A book, some thoughts on the Middle Ages

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HAROLD C. GARDINER

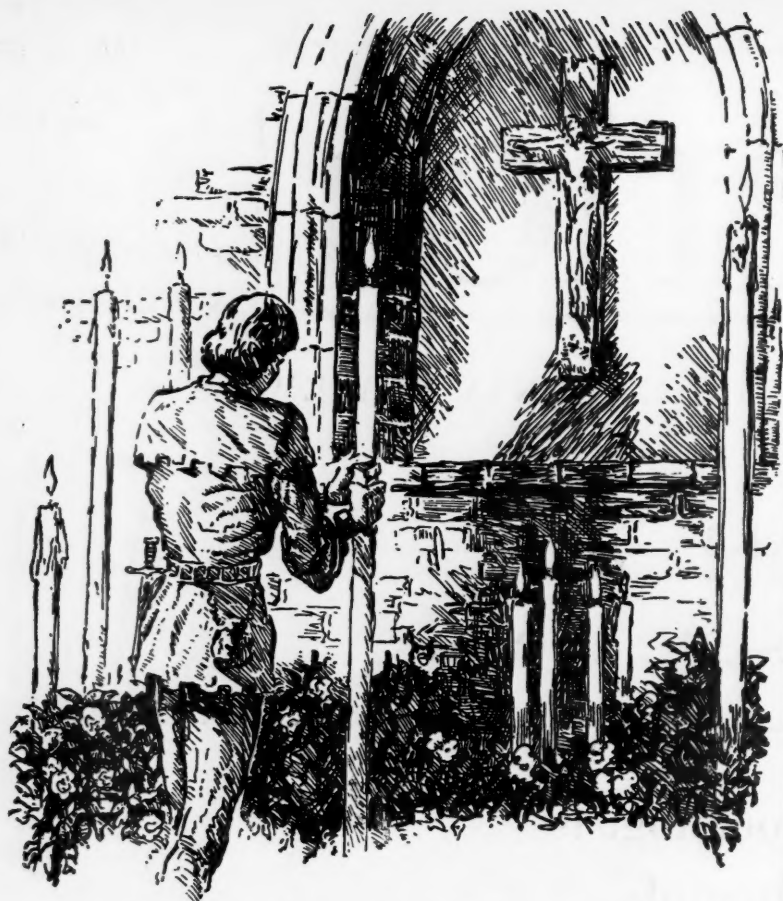
**EDITORIALS :** Pius XII on coexistence • The  
President and Congress • The Negro's economic  
progress • Colombo Plan report

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*Book Reviews • The Word • Theatre • Films • Correspondence*

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## "Measuring Up" to a Saint

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This practice gave rise to the expression of "measuring up" to a saint.

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### *Gamble in Vietnam*

The agreement between South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia on the one hand and France on the other, signed Dec. 29, is a case of closing the stable door after the theft of the horse. Had similar guarantees of political, economic and financial independence been given the three countries as early as 1947, the story of Indo-China might have closed on a quite different chapter than the one written at Geneva last June. As it is, the Franco-Indo-Chinese accord is overshadowed by another agreement reached almost simultaneously by North Vietnam's Communist regime with China. In addition to sending military aid to the Vietminh, the Chinese Communists have contracted to develop communications in North Vietnam and provide rail and air links with Red China. The nature of the aid admits of only one interpretation. The Communists are bent on building up in the north as strong a military force as possible. In the meantime we are apparently going ahead with our plan to cut the South Vietnamese army and step up economic aid, on the theory that the threat to the country lies in the direction of subversion rather than aggression from the north. What is more, we share with no one the responsibility in this decision, for the agreement signed by France on Dec. 29 really amounts to a French withdrawal from Indo-China as far as policy-making is concerned. As of Jan. 1 we have begun channeling aid to the native Governments directly and have taken up the task of training the truncated South Vietnamese army. In short, given the precarious situation in South Vietnam, we are entering on our most perilous gamble in Asia since the Korean war.

### *FOA fights for its life*

In an effort to win from the new Congress a reversal of the death sentence imposed on it by the 83rd, the Foreign Operations Administration has assembled some persuasive statistics. These tend to exemplify the biblical injunction: "Cast thy bread upon the running waters; for after a long time thou shalt find it again." The FOA figures show that the aid which the U. S. Government has dispensed abroad has enriched many of our citizens. In the 1954 fiscal year, 76 per cent of the \$4.9 billion poured out in foreign aid was spent within the United States. About a quarter of all U. S. exports that year was financed by foreign-aid outlays. FOA supplied the money for 36 per cent of wheat and flour exports, 28 per cent of cotton exports and 29 per cent of machine tool exports. Naturally, Harold Stassen, administrator of FOA, hopes that statistics of this kind will appeal to the enlightened self-interest, not only of many citizens, but even more of the Congressmen who speak for them in Washington. The figures do offer an answer of sorts to the glib description of foreign-aid expenditures as "giveaway" programs. The pity is that such an answer has to be made at all. To discharge a duty binding in Christian charity, a country which believes in the brotherhood of *all* men under the common

## CURRENT COMMENT

Fatherhood of God, as ours does, ought not to need the less noble motive of self-interest, enlightened or otherwise.

### *British payment on loan*

Almost lost in a flurry of year-end news was a story from Washington that emphasizes once again the need for a liberal approach to foreign trade. On Dec. 31 the Bank of England presented to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York a draft for \$137 million. This was in payment of interest and principal on the \$3.7 billion loan which the United States made in 1946 to assist Britain's postwar recovery. On the same day, the British arranged to pay \$4.2 million in interest on a 1948 Marshall Plan loan of \$392 million. Although such transactions are not news in financial circles, many Americans seem unaware that Britain has been meeting regularly all her World War II obligations to this country. She has already reduced the principal of her debt by more than a half-billion dollars and met interest charges of more than \$400 million. Those who recall that Britain's World War I debt to the United States has been in default since 1933 may wonder why our friends are meeting their obligations in the one case and defaulting in the other. The answer is, of course, that in recent years Britain has been able to earn dollars in the American market to pay her debts, whereas in the 1930's it was impossible for her to do so. It was impossible for a number of reasons, but a very important one was that U. S. tariffs in the early 1930's were prohibitively high and discouraged imports. That helps to explain why President Eisenhower insists on carrying forward the liberal trade policy which Cordell Hull initiated twenty years ago. He knows very well that our foreign debtors cannot repay us unless they are given a chance to earn dollars in the U. S. market.

### *Jews in today's France*

Is French Judaism disappearing? Arnold Mandel asks this question in a competent and searching article in the December *Commentary*. In "French Jewry in a Time of Decision," the French Jewish poet and novelist says that when secularization was the order of the day, "progressive" French Jews found that "in the framework of such a society there was no need to make any concessions whatsoever to Christianity."

Jewish origin then seemed to constitute "an a priori warrant of loyalty and a certificate of republicanism." But today the whole complex of politico-philosophic ideas derived from Renan is steadily disintegrating. French intellectuals, even atheists, "struggle with God and the idea of God." Will Judaism revive? No, says M. Mandel, there seems to be no ground on which to build a new religious life for France's 250,000 Jews. He reports their mass-conversion to Catholicism. "Tens of thousands of French Jews, a large proportion of them children and adolescents," have been received into the Church, he says, since the end of World War II. This he explains as a product of "self-interest," not of "moral considerations." First of all, M. Mandel's figure is greatly exaggerated. Second, his explanation is simply the stock Jewish answer to Jewish conversions. It hardly accords with the fact that there are so many Jewish converts in France who have been ordained to the Catholic priesthood. Moreover, converts who come into the Church from Jewish families generally come singly, moved by conviction. Whole families have become Catholic, each member being baptized secretly so as not to disturb others in the family. Then they suddenly discover they are all Catholics. This does not look like conversion through self-interest.

### **Refugees are still blocked**

Fifteen months ago the Refugee Relief Act of 1953 became law. Since then, 12,000 visas have been issued under provisions calling for the admission of 209,000 refugees before the end of 1956. The catch in that figure of 12,000, however, is that exactly 67 of these represented bona-fide refugees or escapees. The rest were people with relatives already in this country who could have been admitted under normal immigration procedures. The fact of the matter is that the Refugee Relief Act never got off the ground. It has been bogged down by provisions that ruined it from the beginning, mainly one requiring that every refugee admitted must have a personal assurance of work and living quarters. Group assurances, possible and very effective before the Act of 1953, have been of no use since that date. Consequently, the work of the NCWC Resettlement committees all over the country, as well as the work of similar non-governmental agencies,

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which used to obtain group assurances, is at a standstill. On Dec. 30, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles appointed Edward Corsi, retiring New York State Industrial Commissioner, to be special assistant for refugee and migration problems. Mr. Corsi is an able public servant with experience in this type of work. But the appointment can do little to solve the problem unless the law itself is overhauled. President Eisenhower promised this during his campaign. Until the change, thousands of deserving refugees will never reach the land of their hopes and dreams.

### **Power, speed and moral responsibility**

Have you realized that over the New Year's week end we experienced a major national disaster? That's what Ned H. Dearborn, president of the National Safety Council, called the toll of 264 killed in traffic accidents during this brief period. The council had predicted 240 deaths, but said on Jan. 3 that the complete count would come close to 300. A week earlier, 392 died on the highways over the Christmas week end. Why does it happen, year in and year out? Cannot something be done beyond urging people to drive soberly and carefully, beyond strict enforcement of traffic laws and check-ups on the condition of cars? It strikes us that it is time for the automotive industry to take a long and steady look at itself. As we commented earlier (1/1, p. 352), the trend in auto manufacturing is all toward greater and greater horsepower and speed, and the trend in advertising is the same. It is silly to highlight enticingly in ads the fact that a car has "rocket-power," and then expect that the driver is going to be content to poke along at 40 miles an hour. Here is where the auto-makers share a moral responsibility with the driver. If they would first make their cars as safe as possible, and then insist on the safety factor in their sales talks, people would likely become less speed-and-power conscious. We praise the determination, whenever it is shown, of such industries as television and the comic books to regulate themselves for the common good. Might not the automakers and their ad men begin to think in similar terms?

### **Child labor and delinquency**

In the welter of voices giving forth these days on the thorny problem of juvenile delinquency, none deserves a more cautious ear than that which makes the child-labor laws a major villain of the piece. The National Child Labor Committee states in its annual report for the year ending Sept. 30 that an old argument keeps bouncing up. Child-labor laws, by preventing children from being freely employed in industry, are said to breed idleness and contribute to juvenile delinquency. Fourteen- and 15-year-olds who are "incorrigibles" or "unhappy" at school, so the argument goes, should be allowed to quit and get a job. As the Senate Committee on Juvenile Delinquency has already pointed out, however, there is no general relationship between employment as such and delin-

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quency. During 1954, close to 2 million young people 14 to 17 were working full-time or part-time during the school year and nearly 3 million during the summer vacation period. Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, Harvard University's experts on juvenile delinquency, found in an intensive study that after-school work was not a significant factor in lessening delinquency rates. Eighty-four per cent of the 500 delinquents studied worked after school, as compared with 78 per cent of the matched 500 non-delinquents studied. So far as we know, there are no reliable delinquency statistics for full-time child-workers. Whether frustrated school children should be put into full-time employment in industry depends on the individual child and the specific job. A general weakening or abrogation of the child-labor laws is no answer to the problem at all.

### **Social workers needed**

One-tenth of the 100,000 available positions in the field of social work are currently unfilled. Dr. Ernest F. Witte, executive director of the Council on Social Work Education (345 E. 45th St., N. Y. C.), recently voiced the alarm of public and private welfare agencies over our short supply of welfare workers and the steadily dropping enrolment in schools of social work. As U. S. social-welfare agencies attempt each year to reach more and more people in need of assistance, and try to make more effective use of the approximately \$15 billion for whose expenditure they are responsible, there is a natural concern that qualified students should continue to be attracted into social-service vocations. Dr. Witte, reporting on current enrolment trends in schools of social work, has called attention to a more than 20-per-cent decrease in enrolment during the last four years. In 1950 there were 6,366 students enrolled in schools of social work. During the present academic year there are only 5,109. The Council on Social Work Education has begun a campaign to interest young people in social-work careers. The profession, they point out, offers economic security and many opportunities for advancement. The national average beginning salary for a professional case worker is now \$3,400, with periodic increases according to experience, ability and responsibility. Administrative salaries run as high as \$10,000 and, in some cases, \$25,000. Catholic college men and women, eager to devote their lives to the care of weaker members of Christ's mystical body, need not be told that there are rewards of a different order for serving Him in slums, hospitals and homes for delinquents.

### **Scholars at cross-purposes**

A scholar at the annual year-end meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, held this year in Berkeley, Calif., asked his colleagues whether it was not "about time that academicians stopped using the word 'spirit' apologetically, furtively or in a whisper." Prof. Joseph Mayer, chairman of the Economics Department at Miami University, Oxford, O., may have caused a raised eyebrow here

and there in his learned audience when he said: "What I am venturing to submit is that mechanism and materialism have intimidated the world of scholarship all too long." That Prof. Mayer was not tilting against an unreal problem became startlingly evident in another address to the AAAS by Dr. Alan Gregg, vice president of the Rockefeller Foundation. Dr. Gregg, in discussing the question of the world's rapidly increasing population, more than justified Prof. Mayer's strictures by likening the population growth of the human species to the spread of a malignant growth in an individual. The cancer-metaphor was no passing figure of speech in Dr. Gregg's paper. He pursued it relentlessly, comparing the metastasis, or spreading of cancer, to the colonization of undeveloped parts of the globe. The growing demands of the human race for food he compared with the "appetite" of cancer cells. City slums, he said, correspond in some respects to the degradation of parts of the body attacked by cancer cells. The vicious errors latent in this approach to the question of man's multiplying life on this planet are totally subversive of the dignity of man and the meaning of the human person. We trust that this line of thinking on the part of its vice president does not represent the policies of the tax-exempt foundation he helps administer.

### **Spanish theologian on atomic warfare**

The moral implications of atomic and other like weapons of mass destruction continue to occupy the attention of Catholic theologians. The Dec. 24, 1954 issue of the *St. Louis Register*, official newspaper of the archdiocese (4532 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis 8, Mo.) carried an unusually penetrating discussion of the problem. It was written by Rev. Pedro Lumbreras, Spanish Dominican who is professor of moral theology at the Angelicum, pontifical university in Rome. Although holding that the recently developed weapons are legitimate under certain circumstances, the writer warned that advocacy of their use in a preventive war is on hazardous ground. He criticized the theory that the Soviet Union might be considered, for all practical purposes, to be in a state of habitual war against us, and that since delay could prove fatal we might permissibly unleash an atomic raid. The theologian asked: "May we strike down an individual merely because he is saying he will put us to death?" The Spanish Dominican also warned against the theory that the millions of civilian casualties resulting from an atomic raid can be justified as a direct means to the end of safeguarding our lives and our liberties. "Great as is our fear of Russian Communists," wrote the theologian in the *Register*, "it is no greater than the terror Christian countries had, centuries ago, of Saracens and Turks." Yet, as he testified, the great theologian Vittoria held that even in warfare against the Turks it was not lawful to kill their children. The essay of Father Lumbreras is not necessarily the last word on the subject, but it deserves close study and wide circulation.

## WASHINGTON FRONT

First business of the 84th Congress was to organize, or, in this case, reorganize. With the Democrats taking over control of both Houses, many changes were made. There were a new Speaker of the House, new Majority Leaders, new Minority Leaders, and other less conspicuous appointees. But the biggest changes took place in the committees, where most of the business of Congress is transacted.

Republicans lost places in these, Democrats gained. These changes were dictated by party caucuses, working through the respective Committees on Committees, which in turn were tightly controlled by the old-line leaders. As for committee chairmanships, while there were elections, these were a pure formality. Seniority, based on length of tenure of office, or in any given committee, was the ruling criterion. This seniority system is criticized by most political scientists on the ground that not merit but merely old age, in most cases decides chairmanships. It is not surprising, then, that Southern Democrats, who are automatically elected over and over again, secure most of the plums. The political mortality among Northern Democrats is pretty high.

Thus in the Senate most major committee chairmanships are held by Southerners: for instance, Armed Services, Foreign Relations, Agriculture, Banking and Currency, Finance, Government Operations, Education and Labor. The House follows pretty much the same pattern, with the all-powerful Rules Committee in the hands of a Virginian. Yet the almost equally powerful House Ways and Means Committee, which initiates all money bills, is chairmanned by what may be called a Northerner, a Missourian. But in Washington, Missouri ranks as a border State.

At the beginning, at least, all eyes will be on two committees: the House Rules Committee, and the Senate Government Operations Committee, hitherto headed by Senator McCarthy, with its subsidiary, the permanent Government Investigations Subcommittee. The Rules Committee has also been under fire from political scientists, because literally every bill reported out by other committees must pass its scrutiny before it can get a "rule" allowing the total membership to vote on it. Frequently the rule forbids any amendments to it on the floor of the House. It seems doubtful at this time that any "gag" on the committee will be adopted by the Democrats.

Senator McCarthy's old committees, now headed by Sen. John L. McClellan (D., Ark.) who wants to merge them in a two-house joint committee, may concentrate on their original purpose, corruption and inefficiency in the Executive Branch, with less emphasis on the Communists-in-Government issue than in the immediate past.

WILFRID PARSONS

## UNDERSCORINGS

►Pope Pius XII on Jan. 3 accepted the resignation of Most Rev. Henry P. Rohlman, Archbishop of Dubuque, Iowa, naming him Titular Bishop of Cotrada. He is succeeded by his Coadjutor, Bishop Leo Binz. Archbishop Rohlman, who is 78 years of age, has been a priest for 52 years and a bishop for 27. He was appointed Bishop of Davenport, Iowa, in 1927, was transferred to Dubuque as Coadjutor in 1944 and became Archbishop in 1946.

►The tradition of chaplains with American armed forces is two centuries old this year, and the nearly 500 chaplains of the National Guard (which is older than the U. S. Army), plan to celebrate the bicentennial. A Jan. 5 release from the National Guard Bureau points out that the volunteer militia units which fought in the French and Indian and Revolutionary wars were usually accompanied by chaplains.

►At the annual meeting, Jan. 3, of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, George K. Hunton, editor of *Interracial Review* and executive secretary of the New York Catholic Interracial Council, was elected to the association's national board. He is at present the only Catholic on the board and the second to serve in that capacity.

►The Grail Center, Philadelphia, is offering a three-month program (Feb. 18-May 19) of adult education for young women, aimed at deepening their Catholic life in thought and action. Students and working girls will make the center their home during the course, continuing with job or studies during the day. For details write Miss Anne Mulkeen, 4520 Chester Avenue, Philadelphia 43, Pa.

►Two new U. S. episcopal appointments were announced Jan. 5 by the Apostolic Delegation in Washington. Rev. Charles G. Maloney, vicar general of the Archdiocese of Louisville, Ky., was named Titular Bishop of Capsa and Auxiliary to Archbishop John A. Floersh of Louisville. Msgr. Joseph A. Durick, director of the Catholic Information Center, Birmingham, Ala., was named Titular Bishop of Cerbali and Auxiliary to Archbishop Thomas J. Toolen, Bishop of Mobile-Birmingham.

►The 23rd annual convention of the National Catholic Conference on Family Life will be held Mar. 16-18 in St. Paul, Minn. Its theme will be "The Family Together." Rev. Richard T. Doherty is in charge of convention arrangements (St. Paul Seminary, 2200 Grand Ave., St. Paul 1).

►The Rev. Joseph A. Ryan Foundation, Inc., has been established by the Catholic Accountants Guild of the Archdiocese of Denver with the primary object of advancing accounting and business education at Regis College, Denver. Fr. Ryan is a veteran Jesuit accounting professor at Regis.

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## Pius XII on coexistence

No Pope in modern times deserves more the title of "Pope of Peace" than the present Pontiff. Few will challenge his right to feel, as Pius XII expressed it in his delayed Christmas message, that Providence seems to have assigned him the mission of helping, by means of patient and exhausting toil, to lead mankind back to the paths of peace. His latest Christmas message, the sixteenth in a distinguished series, is an analysis of the cold war and the notion of coexistence. His critique commands a hearing not only because he is the common father of the faithful, but also because he has had a personal role in the life of nations during the past two decades of upheavals.

Pope Pius shows his gratification that the cold war has turned into a more relaxed state of tension known as the cold peace. But he warns that such a peace is but a provisional calm. By excluding all bonds of a spiritual nature between peoples thus fragmentarily coexisting, he notes, the cold peace falls short of that which was preached by the Divine Master. "We do not dare," he says, "offer such a peace to the Divine Infant."

The Holy Father goes on to list the shortcomings of such a peace. Since each in its own way has embarked on economic and political courses which are open to criticism, his remarks fall impartially on both the Communist and the free world. He criticizes both sides in the cold peace for basing their programs on fear, fear of the other's economic and military power. The most obvious absurdity of this "wretched state of affairs," declares the Pope, is that while current political practice dreads war as the greatest of catastrophes, it puts all its trust in it, as if war were the only expedient for survival.

At the same time the Pontiff recognizes that many persons, even some in government, are revising their approach and are asking themselves if peace cannot be sought on higher and more humane levels than on that dominated exclusively by terror. "They have come back," he says, "to consider the problem of peace and war as a fact involving a higher and Christian responsibility before God and the moral law."

In his Christmas message the Holy Father raises the possibility, even the obligation, of seeking to establish a bridge of peace between the two worlds, based upon truth. This cannot be established, he says, unless it is founded upon the human beings living in one and the other of these worlds, and not on their governmental or social systems. In both camps, declares the Pontiff, there are millions in whom the imprint of Christ is preserved in a more or less active degree. "They, too, no less than faithful and fervent believers, should be called upon to collaborate towards a renewed basis of unity for the human race." It is part of the duty of a policy of unification, he adds, to encourage in both contending parties the voices which might speak for truth and love.

Such are the broad outlines of the Pontiff's program

## EDITORIALS

for a sound and Christian policy on coexistence. Catholics and non-Catholics alike will no doubt make the full text the object of close study as they seek light to guide them through the great crises of our troubled times.

### The President and Congress

When the President ascended the rostrum of the House on January 6 to deliver the annual message on the State of the Union, he looked out on an assemblage of one Independent, 250 Republicans and 279 Democrats. (One Democrat, Senator Kennedy of Massachusetts, was unavoidably absent.) The day before, the Democrats, with 232 seats to 203 for the Republicans, had organized the House. With the help of the Independent, Wayne Morse of Oregon, they had also organized the Senate. So it came about that it was Sam Rayburn, newly elected Speaker of the House but no novice in the job, who introduced Mr. Eisenhower to the first joint session of the 84th Congress.

To the viewers the spectacle—apart from the circumstance of a Republican President addressing a Democratic Congress—probably seemed lacking in drama. One reason for this was, no doubt, the absence of any element of suspense or surprise in the President's proposals. During the holiday season the public had been told, either by stories from the Augusta National Golf Club, or by reports from Cabinet officials in Washington, how the Administration felt about last year's record and what it planned for the future. Furthermore, even if the people had not known in advance the substance of the President's proposals, it is doubtful whether they would have found them very exciting. A "moderate progressive" policy may be precisely what the country needs. It may be the only kind of policy which the 84th Congress will approve. But it is scarcely the kind of program which brings people to their feet shouting for more.

On the objectives of foreign policy and the means of realizing them, there is substantial agreement between the White House and a majority of Congress. The Democrats will strongly support the President's plan for liberalizing foreign trade. They will vote to ratify the several treaties which Secretary Dulles negotiated last year. They will support, though much less unanimously, the President's proposals for economic aid to Southeast Asia. Only Indo-China looms as a source of possible trouble to the President, and here the opposition will come as much from the so-called GOP right wing as from certain Democrats.

The outlook for agreement on domestic issues is less promising. The President can count on Democratic help to postpone scheduled drops in corporate and excise taxes, to raise the minimum-wage level, to continue a public-housing program, to increase the pay of civil servants and military personnel and to expand the highway program. There, however, the area of agreement stops. On revision of Taft-Hartley, on farm-price supports, on public-power policy, on the size of the armed services and a revised draft program, on the security-loyalty setup and the health reinsurance plan—on all these issues the partisan fur may fly. It promises to be a stimulating and not unproductive session.

## The Negro's economic progress

At the turn of the year, the spate of fresh economic appraisals is incomplete if they ignore the economy of the American Negroes. No chain is stronger than its weakest link, and America's wealth is bound, for better or worse, to the fate of our 15 million Negroes, the largest racial minority group in the nation.

The Negroes' spectacular progress in other fields, such as education, social status and political freedom, is apt to obscure the fact that economic progress has by no means kept pace with the rest of the advance. "Every city," says *Business Week* for December 18, 1954, in a survey of the Negro economy, "has its wealthy Negroes, but there is no big Negro business." Off the farm, the colored worker has done little more than hold his own. The fact is that, on the basis of family income, the Negro in 1952 was no closer to parity with the white majority than he was in 1945.

The conventional picture of a steady march to prosperity from the days of Emancipation onward is not borne out by the facts. Despite their gains, about one-half of Negro men and two-thirds of Negro women are still below the semi-skilled level. Against this, only about one-sixth of white men and women are below it. And Negroes who have acquired skills find biased employment policies a difficult obstacle to surmount.

One of the biggest disappointments in the Negro's economic history was American agriculture's failure to provide what once seemed like an ideal solution. With the displacement of Southern farm labor through high-powered machinery and the drift to the cities through industrialization, the quondam tenant's or poor farm laborer's cabin has been succeeded, not by the hoped-for small, privately owned Negro farm, but by grasslands on the big estates. In this area there has been little, if any, improvement in the status of Negroes.

How fast the Negro progresses economically from now on, concludes the survey, will depend partly on how fast social attitudes continue to change. "But a more important factor—and a less impersonal one—will be how close the economy continues to run to full employment," and how much tightness prevails in the white labor market.

"The day of equal opportunity for the Negro is far-

ther off in the South than it is in the North," says *Business Week*, "if only because the South has a pool of underemployed whites to draw from before it has to turn to the Negro." Yet in general the economic tide is running with the Negro. How soon will that tide carry him to full equal opportunity? That's a question that touches the heart of our manpower problem. If the facts give the wrong answer, the interests of all Americans will suffer.

## Colombo Plan report

The third year-end report of the Colombo Plan consultative committee is one of guarded optimism. The huge investments in economic and industrial development made in the areas of South and Southeast Asia since 1950 are undoubtedly beginning to pay off. Yet, the countries involved are, in the words of the report, "under no illusions about the magnitude of the efforts [still] required."

During 1954, six countries in the vast region stretching from Pakistan as far east as Indonesia spent 704 million pounds sterling on development projects. This sum represents a 31-per-cent increase over the amount expended in 1953. As a result India has been able to up food production by 8 million tons over the previous year's good harvest. Industrial production rose 4½ per cent. In Pakistan the Government devoted 28 per cent of public expenditures to economic and industrial development, a figure expected to rise to 39 per cent as the Colombo Plan gathers hoped-for momentum in 1955. Steady progress is also reported in Burma and Ceylon. The only country lagging behind is Indonesia.

The Colombo Plan has notably proved its feasibility in India and Pakistan, where, during 1954, a greater proportion of development than heretofore was financed from internal resources. Though the originators of the Plan recognized that investment funds from abroad would be necessary, they also envisaged it as an experiment in self-help and mutual assistance. The success of India and Pakistan in mobilizing a large portion of their financial resources for development proves that the nations of Asia can contribute to their own economic stability.

As far as outside help is concerned, the contributions of Australia and Canada have been noteworthy. Australia has already spent more than one-half the 31.25 million pounds pledged over the proposed six-year life span of the program. Most of this has gone into agricultural projects, particularly in Ceylon. During the past year Canada appropriated \$25.4 million to promote hydroelectric schemes in India and Pakistan. The United States, therefore, is not alone in its financial contributions to free-world solvency.

This record of Colombo Plan achievement should spur us on to greater participation in Asian aid programs, especially in the field of technical assistance. These programs must gather momentum if the decent living standards they promise are to keep pace with Asia's growing population.

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## Scrabble on Madison Avenue

Thurston N. Davis

WHEN YOU PICK UP an advertisement for a new car, says Rev. Clifford Howell, S.J., you expect to be dazzled by a mysterious vocabulary. He tells us in *Of Sacraments and Sacrifice* (Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minn., 1952) that a magazine reader who finds an article on theopneustic euchology in a liturgical journal will drop it as though it were red-hot. However, if he reads that a new car

... has a body designed on a kecharitomenous principle, with a holosphuretic radiator in front, an anaskeuazic boot behind and a skiatrophic roof on top, he forthwith rushes off brandishing a check book in one hand and a fountain pen in the other to place an immediate order. . . .

Advertising agencies, if not liturgists, can get away with it.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with an obscure word of legitimate Greek origin, even when it is as erudite as "triakaidekaphobia." Trouble starts when we play fast and loose with words. We give them Joycean new looks (Ibath, Eye-gene, Eye-cues), twist them into puns (happy shoe year, button up your overquote), rig them out with delayed-action charges (shop in our winter underland) and kick them around till they produce new sound effects (scoldy locks, riding-hood red).

We mustn't be too serious about all this. The world will go right on spinning, even if the lexicographers go out of their minds. However, an article like this may uncover a few kindred souls willing to join in a modest communal yowl of fellow feeling on the subject of words.

Now and again our current habit of fooling around with words spills over into personal tragedy. On November 12, 1954 the *New York Times* carried the story of a Republic Aviation Corporation engineer from Wantagh, L. I., who spent five anxious and bewildered months suspended from his job as a security risk. This came about because someone on the company's screening board thought the word "neurodermatitis," which appeared in his health report, meant "psychoneurosis."

Before we begin throwing everything in sight at the blundering official, let us see whether we cannot at least partially exculpate him. On what grounds? Simply because, like the rest of us, the investigator at Republic had probably begun to wonder whether words really have fixed meanings any more.

The abbreviation bug bit us some years ago, and by now we are all fairly well immunized against UN, NAM, AMA, TVA, NATO, SEATO and BENELUX.

Mr. Dooley once remarked that "when we Americans are through with the English language, it will look as if it had been run over by a musical comedy." Since that time it has been run over by the movies, radio and TV; and most notably by the agencies that produce newspaper advertising and radio and TV commercials. Fr. Davis, associate editor of *AMERICA*, assesses the damage done to the victim.

My favorite among these space-savers is SITSAMOTAP—"Studies in the Scope and Method of the Authoritarian Personality." But these upper-case beauties make quite a different story from the more dubious trend in word-busting which concerns us here.

Here are a few samples of the verbal bacilli we take into our bloodstreams every day with the morning paper. A blimpwich is a monster Dagwood. Traxcavators are for the farm, exercycles for the form. Mistle toes are slippers. Ranchjamas and perma-sized skijamas are what you wear to bed. You also wear antsy pants. Rain dears are rubber boots. A drizzler is a jacket. Nail polish is a recipe for ladyfingers. Ladies wear per-suede-ing ensembles and are shod with Paradise kittens:

For a smart little cookie—  
Purr-fect fitting snookie.

The ancient battle of Marathon, last stand of the Spartans against the Persians, has three new cousins—walkathon, talkathon and phonathon.

Planning to give people presents? Why not a phonorama for the family, a cholly hoss for the kids, an adap-table for the spare room? Wear-with-all lip-stick makes a cheap gift for the wife. Why not write her a check for the handsome celaperm acetate taffeta shower curtain with the elegant lurex stripe, with an extra thousand thrown in for one of those Steuben crystal Ballad (salad) bowls? Wouldn't she look fine in a Cashmiracle—a coat of cashmere and wool, in case that one is too hard for you?

In quite different books and contexts, Robert Jungk and Louis Kronenberger recently warned Americans that they seem never able to leave things alone. We are forever tinkering around, restlessly improving on our gadgets, ideas, mixed drinks—and words. We put a dash of the Congo into our folk songs and do *Carmen* and *Aida* over into *Carmen Jones* and *My Darlin' Aida*. Perhaps, in the realm of language, this is the way it should be. Change is what writes the biography of a living, kicking thing like language. People full of vitality will always tend to discover expressive outlets for new experiences.

It could be. Perhaps the language of Chaucer and Churchill is better for now including k-veniences, which are hangers, coinveniences, which hold money for parking meters, kon-veen-yunt tire chains, food-tainers and keytainers, roylies, which are doilies, plast-cap thumbtacks, tasteas, teariffic teabags, kar-pokits, diced cream, expaditers (pads of paper), slipper-grippers, chap sticks, paper mates, superfecion straw-

berries, dangeratings, schweppervescence and buff-aloha sandals—from India, not Honolulu.

The pleasures of vacationing somewhere in the hills of Pennsylvania can be simply fun-tastic (no doubt registered with the U. S. patent office). Ladies can do lots in culottes and summarize in summer dresses, size 16-40. After a long day in the office, their husbands come home and slip on their leisuals.

These verbal tricks are the work of the best young minds in New York's Madison Avenue advertising sancta. A clocker spaniel is an electric clock. Drypers, chux and kar dypers are fairly obvious. If I had to pick one out of a hundred, my favorite would be the ad showing a little girl in a snow suit sitting in an empty refrigerator and playing with a box of ice cubes.

All you need to know in advance is that "Element" here means a fabric. Here is part of the text:

Keeping warm is child's play . . . She's in her Element. The perfect anti-freeze for your child . . . No wonder Kute Kiddie Coats, Inc., specifies Element Cloth for this completely one-piece Snoverall that's a snap to get into.

That was a good day's work for some bright fellow.

There are some specialized meadows which these word-game boys have not let escape their riot. One is that of meats, steaks and beef combinations. This juicy area boasts a Steak Pit and a Steak-House-on-92nd-Street as restaurants. The latter is owned by the Steak Set, Inc. Why not drop in for a steerburger or a burg in hand?

Another specialized department is that of the scientific come-on. If you had just flown in from remotest Africa and were not as yet privy to the blessings of wide-screen movies, what would you make of this Twentieth Century-Fox advertisement? Reduced to sober lower-case, it reads: *The Egyptian* may be seen and heard "in the wonder of 4-track, high-fidelity, directional-stereophonic sound, photographed with the revolutionary new anamorphic lens in cinemascope." It takes a special kind of education these days to understand the signs on a movie marquee.

There is something subtly flattering about these science words, whether genuine or made-for-the-trade. Each of us has a bit of the Walter Mitty in him. We like to feel cut in on the mysteries of nuclear physics and biochemistry. Few of us will ever find uranium in our vegetable gardens, but we can all have razor blades treated with duridium, shoe polish with lanolor, warfarin for killing rodents, irium in our toothpaste. We can even make top-soil in the back yard with fluffium. As a wag put it not long ago, all we need now is bullium.

There is a little trick in manufacturing these verbal eye- and ear-catchers. You simply "soup up" some pale, thin word or phrase of ordinary experience until it

takes on a new and jarring appeal. Start with a run-of-the-mine word like "automatic." It has a fixed meaning. Other words with stable meanings are "hydrometric" and "hydroelectric." These suggest a cross-breed which will produce "hydromatic." Your competitor will then concoct the meaningless word "ultramatic." See if you can go him one better. "Cobramatic" carries the game a step further into a realm of total linguistic goofiness. "Dokto-matic" is even better. Now start again with a word like "orthopedic." Push that around until you come up with "posturepedic." And so it goes.

This meretricious use of sounds and syllables to titillate a jaded public has no limit. The result is a slow corruption of language. Words are meant to have

meaning. They are conventional symbols for the spiritual realities we call ideas. Until the recent past, a kind of abiding respect for language kept us from permitting its disintegration through arbitrary combination of its mangled elements. When new words came to life, their birth was superintended by jealous academies of lexicographical midwives. Experimental grafts were made with learned regard for etymology, history and consecrated usage. There was a time, before we got to exploiting language as a set of purely evocative symbols, when we would not

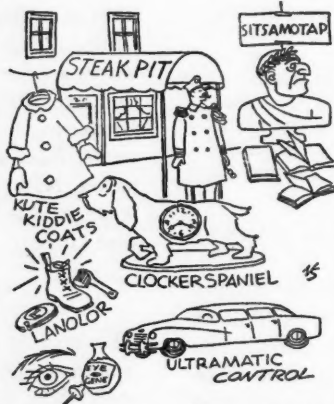
have dared to bastardize a glorious name like Marathon into a monster like "phonathon." Now anything goes.

At bottom the problem is one of respect for inherent form. In her foreword to the Bentley-Chesterton *The Coloured Lands* (Sheed and Ward, 1938), Maisie Ward unearthed an obscure article by GKC which appeared in the *New Witness* back in 1917. There Chesterton discussed the severe limitations imposed on creative imagination by the inexorable law of form. The painter mixes colors through primary, secondary and tertiary blendings. He produces exquisite combinations. But then the danger arises that he will fall into error:

He imagines himself an inaugurator as well as an innovator; he thinks he stands at the beginning of a long process of change; whereas, as a matter of fact, he has come to the end of it. Let him take the next step; let him mix one exquisite mixture with another exquisite mixture, and the result will not be another and yet more exquisite mixture; it will be something like mud.

There is, in other words, a law of diminishing returns in this business of creative innovation. We may make a centaur out of a man and a horse, or a griffin of a lion and an eagle. But "mongrels do not breed," Chesterton warns:

The offspring of the Missing Link and a mule, if happily married to the promising child of a Manx cat and a penguin, would not outrun centaur and griffin; it would be something lacking in all



the interesting features of man and beast and bird. It would not be another and more fantastic shape; but simply shapelessness.

This same law applies to words.

Perhaps this is too solemn an analysis of Madison Avenue. After all, a fellow has to make a living. But as they say down there when a big problem comes up late Friday afternoon: "Let's kick this around over the week-end, and Monday morning we'll get together and cross-pollinate." There might be something in it after all.

## Some sociologists out of bounds

Gordon George

A STRONGLY CHALLENGING ARTICLE, "Value-free methodology—a sectarian weapon," by Everett S. Graham, a professor of political science in a large nonsectarian university, appeared in the Oct. 9, 1954 issue of this Review. Many social scientists in present-day academic and public life, said Professor Graham, pose a serious threat to religion. They begin by refusing admittance to value judgments in their systematic research and theory, and end up in practice by denying all values that have not been tested by their research methods. Thus they build a methodological fence around their own area of study and are soon found to be denying that anything worthy of the name of knowledge exists outside that kind of fence. Because philosophy and religion are beyond the reach of their method, they are written off as mere personal preferences.

### GOD AS SYMBOL OF SOCIETY

Overt hostility to religion is seldom found in the published writings of social scientists in this country. There is, however, not a little written evidence of the scientific method wandering around outside its legitimate boundaries and making itself the measure of all things. Kingsley Davis, associate director of Columbia University's Bureau of Applied Social Research, gives us an example. In an otherwise excellent sociology text, he writes:

In making scientific sense of nonscientific belief and practice, in explaining religion, myth, magic and ritual, there has been one trend of social theory more successful than the rest. This is the functional-structural type of sociological analysis (*Human Society*. New York: Macmillan, 1948, p. 518).

Professor Davis goes on to explain the use of this

Fr. George is an associate editor of AMERICA.

type of functional analysis in the work of Emile Durkheim, who saw in religion an important functional support for society. In fact, Durkheim's analysis leads him to the scientific conclusion that all sacred objects and concepts, including God, are in reality symbols of society. It is really human society that man unwittingly worships. Davis criticizes Durkheim's conclusions, but praises the functional approach and offers more modern conclusions.

It [Durkheim's theory] undertakes to identify society as the empirical reality that sacred symbols symbolize. But obviously sacred objects do not symbolize society at all. *They symbolize nonexistent entities—creatures and principles of the other world.* The relation of these to society is not a symbolic relation but only a functional one: the effect of the beliefs and rites with respect to sacred symbols is to create a more cohesive society (p. 524, emphasis added).

What canon of the scientific method or principle of value-free methodology permits Mr. Davis, as a sociologist, to teach that "creatures and principles of the other world" are "nonexistent realities"? We do not, of course, question his personal liberty to hold that belief. We do challenge his passing it off as scientific sociology. In the name of science he has unscientifically reduced religion to a mere device for bolstering social order.

### THE SUPERNATURAL AS FICTION

This is not just a random slip. Later on in his text he tells us that "the unseen world is, of course, fictitious, but it must appear real to the actor if it is to accomplish its function of rationalizing and justifying his ultimate group ends" (p. 527).

Still further on, he lets us in on a secret which, like caviar, is apparently not for the general:

Dependent as it is upon subjective faith, religion withers like a leaf before a flame when the scientific attitude is brought to bear on it . . . If the public in general undertook an analysis of religious behavior, using systematic research tools, it would be the death of religion. Needless to say, such an eventuality is not likely (p. 536).

Toward the end of his "sociological approach" to religion, Mr. Davis tolerantly concludes: "All told, the sacred, or holy, performs such an important function in society that it will probably never disappear" (p. 544)—except, of course, for those of us who are smart enough to catch on to the scientific method of doing away with it.

To be perfectly fair to Mr. Davis, he nowhere in his book expresses a desire to destroy religion. His cool tolerance ranges from the totem pole to the tabernacle. His students learn that religion is a cult of "nonexistent entities" which helps to give us a "cohesive society."

Are there many sociologists who hold with Professor Davis? An interesting study by A. H. Hobbs, professor of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, seems to show that there are. *The Claims of So-*

ciology—a Critique of Textbooks tells of a survey of 54 sociology textbooks containing statements that evaluate religion (Harrisburg: Stackpole, 1951, p. 156). Thirty-three of these texts contend that religious organizations should reorient themselves in the direction of secularization. They should "decrease or eliminate their supernatural appeals, their abstract and moral doctrines, their ritual mysticism and allegiance to traditional codes." Of these 54 texts Mr. Hobbs writes:

Authors generally claim that they [scientists] support rather than oppose religion, but their support of "religion" is similar to their defense of "democracy" and "education" in that it involves a redefinition in "sociological" terms. Religion is redefined in terms which make it practically synonymous with social work. In the "sociological" religion a social-problems textbook would be a more important reference than the Bible. Supernaturalism, veneration of traditional codes of behavior, ritual and mysticism are criticized, and strong emphasis is placed on the necessity of religion becoming secularized (pp. 129-130).

In his summary Professor Hobbs caustically remarks that recommendations that religion should or should not be secularized "would appear to be completely outside the province of science."

Critics of Professor Hobbs' book see it as unduly negative. It gives sociology and sociologists a harder time than they deserve. Whatever the validity of that critical judgment on the book as a whole, it hardly applies to the section on the sociology of religion. That section will not seem overdrawn to anyone acquainted with the run-of-the-mill introductory sociology text. The authors of many of these texts, like Kingsley Davis, usurp the role of philosopher and theologian while masquerading in the garb of the scientist.

Can a well-balanced judgment of the present temper of sociology rest on the evidence of these texts alone? Such a judgment would be risky. Many of the real leaders in contemporary sociological theory are not among the textbook writers. A heartening trend away from a narrow positivism is found, according to some Catholic sociologists, in the work of men like Everett Hughes of the University of Chicago, Robin Williams of Cornell, Robert Merton of Columbia and Talcott Parsons of Harvard.

Other Catholics, however, are inclined to challenge that view. For example, Thomas F. O'Dea, assistant professor of sociology at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in a lengthy article on "The Sociology of Religion" in last June's *American Catholic Sociological Review*, found the escape of Talcott Parsons from positivism more apparent than real. Professor O'Dea, who has himself done valuable sociological studies of the Mormon religion, considers Talcott Parsons' approach "typical of the basic premises accepted by non-Catholics in the field in this country" (p. 74).

Whatever the difference of opinion about the ex-

tent of the danger to religion caused by sociologists out of bounds, few Catholics will deny that a serious challenge exists. The really vital question is what to do about it.

#### DANGERS OF SELF-ISOLATION

Msgr. Ronald A. Knox has documented historically in his *Enthusiasm* the ever present temptation of the Christian to withdraw from the passing show of the world and resort to an exaggerated supernaturalism that has lost its roots in the natural. In the long run, as Monsignor Knox shows, it is religion and the supernatural that suffer. To cut ourselves off from the main stream of scientific study of society on the ground that it is controlled by anti-religious positivists would be a tragic error. The stream will not stop flowing because we are absent. The trained social scientist has today an influence in shaping public policy which cannot be left by default to the anti-religious.

Almost as futile as retreat would be an opposition based on mere invective and recrimination. Even organized pressure from the outside to remove or curb anti-religious sociologists could at best give only a temporary victory.

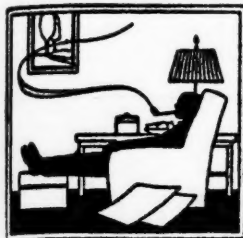
In his article mentioned above, Everett Graham gives the clue to a successful opposition when he calls on "religious persons, highly qualified in the social sciences," to do the job. Only those capable of superior scientific work in social science can effectively combat the unscientific anti-religion of their colleagues.

It seems very important, in this connection, to vindicate the right of sociologists to a value-free methodology and the use of the scientific method in their study of social phenomena. Christopher Dawson wrote twenty years ago an extensive plea for such a scientific sociology. He enlarged on the evil consequences of a failure to follow the ideal of a truly scientific sociology, which led in America to "the creation of a pragmatic system of social ethics that embodied all the impurities and confusions of thought that it is the purpose of both philosophy and science to avoid." (See the reprint of Dawson's "Sociology as a Science" in *Cross Currents*, Winter, 1954.)

Catholic sociologists in America can best serve the cause of religion by being outstanding scientific sociologists. They will be quite clear both on the uses of the scientific method and its limitations. They alone can effectively, with an authority born of their scientific prestige, point out those limits to their colleagues who are out of bounds. In the words of the late Cardinal Suhard, they must effectively cooperate with all those, believers and unbelievers, who pursue the truth with all their soul.

In that way the upholders of religion can in all charity reason with the sincere. In justice as well as in charity they will expose the insincere and the malicious. If truth is to triumph the conquest must be from within.

## FEATURE "X"



*Sr. Robert Marie of the Sisters of Loretto at the Foot of the Cross (the first all-American congregation in this country) tells of Fr. Rahm, S.J., and Our Lady's Youth Center in El Paso, Texas.*

IN A CITY OF ANY SIZE there are "nice" people whose sins never get into print and there are unfortunate ones who haven't enough money left after sinning to keep them out of print. El Paso, Texas, has its saints as well as its sinners, but in the southern section, "across the tracks," there is no money to segregate one from the other. The result is that sin walks the streets or sits in open doorways or garnishes itself with a saucy come-and-get-me look and admits only a few good "contacts" to the places of its committing. Children are face to face with immorality, intemperance and a hundred forms of dishonesty. Often lacking the necessary amount of clothing to permit them to go in public, they spend their days in the halls, yards and alleys of their neighborhood, seeing human derelicts instead of reading stories from pretty picture books and learning the beautiful truths of Christ.

Many saw the need for doing something about such a situation, but like the characters in the parable of the Good Samaritan, "they passed by." That is, until the advent of a 34-year-old Jesuit, Father Harold J. Rahm. Like some Pied Piper, he began playing a tune which held the ear of everyone, from city officials to the local junk man.

First there was the need of getting the youngsters off the streets; even out of their own homes for a while. For many months Father Rahm cast furtive glances in the direction of a much-in-need-of-repair building in which the Knights of Columbus held their meetings. When the "Go" sign at last lit up for him, he corralled the children from five to fifty-five and said: "Here's your chance; let me help you make the best of it." They made Our Lady's Youth Center.

Then followed days and weeks of personal canvassing of business houses, private individuals and institutions for money, donations, labor, equipment. Result: a black-topped yard with swings, teeters and monkey bars for the kiddies; and courts for volley ball and basketball. Inside there is a regulation wrestling ring, \$3,000 worth of showers (the latest gift to be received), ping-pong tables, shuffle board and a great variety of other games, active or sedentary.

Some forty people have offered their services to "the center," as it has come to be called. These are not just anybodies who happen to indulge a yen for slum-

ming. They include pro and semi-pro wrestlers, judo masters, craft instructors, dancing teachers, directors of riflery; and a good Man Friday who fell into Father Rahm's hands like the much-sung-about pennies from Heaven.

All the members of the center are grouped into clubs, each functioning on the rules and pattern of the National Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary. There is the Stanislaus Club for those of grade-school age, there are the Fatima, Guadalupano, Luises and Alcoholic Anonymous clubs. These reach out to teen-agers, older young men and women and even to adult single and married men to provide their minds with food for thought and their stomachs with something more digestible than "reefers" and alcohol.

Each night the center's doors are open until ten o'clock. Juke boxes and record players provide the music for ballroom- and square-dancing parties. A well-padded floor absorbs the shocks of the knock-outs in the boxing ring. Supervised card games become a safe outlet for the gambling spirit. Father Rahm stays close by through it all, lest the unusual or unexpected should turn up. Neither is he without a stole, because he never knows when he may have use for it.

Religious instruction is being given most informally. Preparation for classes will be a slow process; and much patience will be needed by those who offer a helping hand. Like missionaries, the teachers must be "all things to all men" and be satisfied if they become trusted friends within a year or two—or three. After that, religion might be a topic of conversation and even of study.

Every afternoon our good Man Friday, with a pickup truck generously loaned for the purpose, sets out for the local bakeries, groceries and markets. Shortly before the supper hour, about one hundred families receive bread, vegetables, meat, cereals and anything else which Friday was fortunate enough to have given to him. To see the look of hunger and suffering turn to an expression of deep gratitude is reward enough for Father and his helpers as they dole out these commodities after many hours of tireless work and supervising.

Each Saturday two Sisters of Loretto go to the center, where they supervise the meetings of a couple of clubs, get into a game or two and make some kind of an attempt at becoming friendly with these children who have never known what it is to have a kind or understanding word spoken to them. Likewise they endeavor to show more by action than by words that they are not ashamed of the children; that they do not reproach them for anything of which their conscience may accuse them; that they know them to be hungry, and naked and friendless, and still want to love them. The handing over of these souls to Christ, whose way these sisters hope to be preparing, can take place only after much time is spent in the desert of prayer and sacrifice.

Father Rahm and those who have thrown in their lot with him do not fear material failure. Texas is too

big to let them down. They are just trusting that Mary and her Son will keep these children of God interested long enough for the seed of love to germinate and turn them from ways of vice to the loving, peaceful, happy ways of the commandments.

Some of our readers may have something to offer Father Rahm and his center. It might be a small or

large donation, or an idea of how to do better what has already been begun. Again, it could be to put the center personnel in touch with just the party who is able to do big things for some very unfortunate neighbors. Then, it might be a prayer—a very fervent prayer that our Lord and His Mother will allow this work to prosper.

SISTER ROBERT MARIE

## A book, some thoughts on the Middle Ages

Harold C. Gardiner

On January 7, Zoé Oldenbourg, author of *The World Is Not Enough*, an historical novel of the Middle Ages, followed up that widely-acclaimed work with a sequel, *The Cornerstone* (Pantheon, \$4.50), which is certain to rouse equally enthusiastic critical "bravos," and which will, moreover, attract a much wider reading audience, for it is the January selection of the Book of the Month Club.

This is all to the good, for *The Cornerstone* is a magnificent book, if somewhat tedious in long, detailed passages. Its magnificence springs from the patent authenticity with which the author, long an historical student of the Middle Ages, brings to teeming, throbbing life both the misery and the glory of those colorful times.

Pennants stream in the wind before the galleries filled with the magnificently gowned court ladies, the jousts charge to the shock on their caparisoned horses; waves of chant rise in the dim aisles of the great cathedrals aglow with their stained-glass windows. But poor wretches in their hovels quail before the threats of brutal lords who wring from them all but the crusts and gruel that will barely keep them alive during the wolf-winter, and some venal priests and bishops do not raise their voices in protest. The whole panorama spread before the reader is stunning, and in more senses than one—it is both exhilarating and shocking.

The tedious portions of the book, it seems to me, are those that deal with the tradition of courtly love, that strange institution by which a man could be well and truly married and faithful in all things, yet give the innermost devotion of his heart to another lady and prove it outwardly through incredible tasks performed at her command. This is indeed a fascinating subject for study, as C. S. Lewis has shown in his *Allegory of Love*, but the long descriptions in *The Cornerstone* tend to be repetitious and clog the otherwise superb pace. In these passages, I feel, the antiquarian lore intrudes.

*Fr. Gardiner, Literary Editor of AMERICA edited Fifty Years of the American Novel (Scribner, 1951).*

## LITERATURE AND ARTS

The story deals with a single French family of knights in the thirteenth century, and is about equally divided in following the fates of three of them: Ansiau, the grandfather; Herbert le Gros, the son; Hagenier, the grandson. The old man, nearly blind and feeling that his days draw to their close, leaves home to make a pilgrimage on foot to the Holy Land, where he had fought in the Crusades. Hagenier does his stint of crusading, too, but it is in France against the fanatic devotees of the Catharist heresy. His story and that of his father Herbert, however, center mainly around the home estates and deal with family intrigues, deaths and marryings, the protection of the lands, dealings with the peasants.

The magnificence of the book comes through predominantly in the character of Ansiau, who, blind, wandering with some equally wretched companions, is captured by the Moors, endures a long martyrdom, and dies in a desperate attempt to escape. Through it all he comes ever closer to God and to our Lord, who, as the title of the book seems to suggest, was the cornerstone not only of the old man's life, but of the whole fabric of the civilization we know as Christendom. There are truly superb passages in the old man's interior monolog that clamor for quotation, but I would call especial attention to the section in which Ansiau, dying alone in the desert and driven by a passionate desire to receive the Blessed Eucharist, to experience in his agony the physical presence of Christ, hits on the idea, which he prays may not be sacrilegious, of "consecrating" a blade of grass, all he can find to consume, to represent the Host.

"O my God, You are here, it is You who will do what must be done. For You are also a priest, the only true priest. Here is this grass, grown where You, perhaps, once walked, for You lived in these parts. Now I make the sign of the Cross upon this thing You created. . .

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By the power I possess in virtue of baptism, I consecrate this grass which I hold in my hands that it may be the image and likeness of Your body. The words of power I do not say, I have not the right, but You will say them for me.

A man dying alone has no choice. You will not let me die of hunger.

And my hunger for Your body is as great as my thirst, God. I have no power, but bless, I pray You, this thing of Your creation, that I may receive it as Your image."

Slowly, he broke the blade of grass in two and raised it to his bruised and swollen lips.

It is the portrayal of such faith that gives the book its greatness, as it was indeed the existence of such faith that is a key to the understanding of the Middle Ages. And yet, it is to be feared that many and many a critic will not grasp the book in its true inwardness, but consider it only as another, if superior, cloak-and-dagger tale, precisely because the faith of the Middle Ages will not be understood. Even so perceptive a commentator as Gilbert Highet, writing in the *Book of the Month Club News* for December, 1954, summarizes by saying:

Gracious and brutal, devoutly pious and shockingly profane, self-seeking and self-forgetful, grossly materialistic and airily fanciful and remotely mystical, often cruel and often tenderly charitable, the soul of the Middle Ages is a mystery to us today . . . we can scarcely begin to comprehend people so unlike ourselves. . .

The first remark suggested by such a commentary is that the Middle Ages were ridden by no more mutually contradictory qualities than our own age is, in so far as it can be viewed as a whole. If the Middle Ages were "gracious and brutal," is not the twentieth century refined and humanitarian—and cursed with concentration camps and slave-labor battalions? If the Middle Ages were "self-seeking and self-forgetful," is not our age remarkable for its organized and international charity and indictable for widespread economic oppression? And so on; the war within the human heart has not changed since the thirteenth century, and in every age and clime the terrible contradictions can be found.

But Mr. Highet's thought may well lead the incautious reader of the book to another and more incorrect conclusion. The history that a vast number of Americans have been taught equates in their minds the Middle Ages with the "Dark Ages." The Middle Ages are therefore seen under a pejorative light, and to insist that they are so vastly different from our own times in their inner qualities is practically the same as to say that their difference means that they were worse, physically, intellectually and morally.

Such thinking about the Middle Ages has not by any means become as scarce as the dodo. It is still commonplace in various popularizations and is certainly stock in the intellectual trade of the famous man in the street. In an article, for example, in the December 11, 1954 *Saturday Review*, Warren Weaver

writes on "Peace of Mind," and makes some devastating and, I feel, much-needed criticisms of the best-selling *The Power of Positive Thinking*, by Norman Vincent Peale. The peace of mind, says Mr. Weaver, that Dr. Peale and other authors like him advocate is really a sort of stagnation, craving a "world at complete rest." And then, in come the poor Middle Ages; Mr. Weaver quotes approvingly from *The Common Sense of Science*, by Bronowski:

Medieval philosophical and religious thought considered that the then unfortunately disorderly world [is ours not disorderly?] "seeks its order in the great ideal hierarchy of how it ought to be. And it ought to be a still perfection."

Undoubtedly the Middle Ages did conceive of society as ideally ranged into a hierarchy, but to call it a "still perfection" is wide indeed of the mark. The concept was rather one of a hierarchy composed of graduated and balancing tensions.

Again, Mr. Weaver calls on Albert Schweitzer to testify that the Middle Ages were dominated by the principle of non-activity, which in turn flowed from "a negation of the world" that contrasts sadly with the modern attitude, which is one "of passionate affirmation . . . interesting oneself in the things in this world and in the life we lead in it."

If one would like to judge the exactitude of this remark and of the general thinking about the Middle Ages that underlies it, one has but to browse through such a book as *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England*, by G. R. Owst (Cambridge, 1933). In the chapters particularly on "The Preaching of Satire and Complaint" and "A Literary Echo of the Social Gospel" are hundreds of practical, concrete examples of how the Church of medieval England (and the same held for the Continent) was indeed "passionately interested" in the world and in the lives men were called on to live in it.

Here, then [says Dr. Owst], the message of the English pulpit, stored in a thousand manuscripts, bursts in upon us with an invigorating freshness. It reveals a Church striving by word of mouth . . . to curb wild passions and vicious habits, to educate the masses in a higher way of life, to reunite a discordant society in brotherly love and common service, to establish, according to its lights, a City of God upon earth, in every home and community, warning, pleading, arguing, now with a show of learning, now with quaint symbolism, now with threats, now with pathos, now with humor, a very human as well as a very formidable Church (p. xiv).

No, there is no call to be smug when we look back on the Middle Ages. We might rather cast the retrospective glance with humility, for there was one thing in which the Middle Ages were different and better. If they were "devoutly pious and shockingly profane," they at least knew the difference between right and wrong. They would have found simply unintelligible the statement of the famous Arnold Toynbee in the recent *This I Believe* (Simon and Schuster):

I believe we have no certain knowledge of what is right and wrong; and, even if we had, I believe we should find it just as hard as ever to do something that we knew for certain to be right in the teeth of our personal interests and inclinations.

The pages of *The Cornerstone* reveal vividly how the saints and the sinners, the superstitious, the rich

and the poor, priests and laity, knew the right, however they freely shaped their lives.

One final thought. I'm wondering how many even Catholic college graduates know enough about the real character of the Middle Ages really to appreciate the achievement in *The Cornerstone*.

### Window on changing Africa

#### AFRICA: WORLD OF NEW MEN

By John J. Considine. Dodd, Mead. 398p. \$4

Driving with Fr. Paul Bordenet through the drab, thorn-scrub country of Tanganyika, Fr. Considine proposed that his fellow Maryknoll missionary give a lift to a couple of ten-year-olds who were on their way to school. The boys spoke no English nor did they know Fr. Paul's Kikwaya, but soon their smiling eyes and flashing teeth signaled a sympathy readily gained. "There was Africa of tomorrow," thought the experienced author-missionary.

If only we could succeed in winning the affection of such as they, and make them understand that we truly wish to help them. If only they could be convinced that we have a genuine love for them, it would be very easy to guide them wisely.

Africa is rapidly producing what the author terms "new men." In their hands lies the future of that vast continent and an unknown degree of the future history of the globe. But will they be "new" in the bad old Ciceronian sense of the *novus homo*, the reckless, irresponsible innovator? Or will they be "new men" born into newness of life in Christ, prepared for the stewardship of the political power and material wealth that may soon pass into their hands?

The spiritual outlook of Africa's many races and colors and nationals south of the Sahara is rapidly becoming polarized between two political and social extremes: the black nationalist independence of the Gold Coast, and the stubborn white supremacy of the Union of South Africa.

One welcomes an intimate glimpse of the great welter of conflicting political, social and spiritual interests now at work. Fr. Considine has achieved this with skill and perception and the narrative power that comes with years of speaking and lecturing in the mission field. His impressions of a journey that took him through numberless nooks and corners of the great African mission field are down-to-earth, practical and convincingly human. There is just enough

of the travelog to take the reader pleasantly along, recounting wonders of devotion and construction in the work of all the missionary orders and congregations—men and women, "European" or native African—with whom he came in contact, and offering a fine tribute to the best work among some of the non-Catholic mission groups as well. Basic statistics are conveniently tabulated (Catholic schools in Africa have almost as many pupils as Catholic schools in the United States), and the attractive volume is enhanced by fourteen pages of superb illustrations, by footnotes and a capacious index.

Africa's present status is so complex and explosive that a writer who wishes to do more than record mere surface impressions has to choose carefully before firing the sling shots of frank language without which his narrative would be flat. Fr. Considine speaks delicately and frankly where both virtues are required, as in appraising the situation of some of the government-aided missions in tropical Africa.

He quotes approvingly the warning words of the British Catholic journalist, Michael de la Bedoyere, on the Mau Mau dilemma in Kenya. Distilling into "six principles" the ideas of Bishop John Blomjous, of the White Fathers, the author expresses what seems to be pretty much his own mind: stress on the African's rights and obligations; active participation in betterment; training to true wisdom in addition to practical technology; recognizing the importance of the tribal culture and world Christianity as essential to it; and, finally, an "African philosophy for the foreigner"—without which all non-African elements (settlers, political administrators, business men, missionaries, visitors) work at cross-purposes.

Fr. Considine has provided a necessary and palatable book at a critical time. It opens a luminous window on the once Dark Continent.

JOHN LAFARGE

### Biography of the Rio Grande

#### GREAT RIVER

By Paul Horgan. Rinehart. 2 vols. \$10

Geographers will tell you that if rivers make the best boundaries between nations, they also make the worst.

## BOOKS

For, just as they delineate separate territories into neat reds and yellows on the maps of embassies and capitols, so they pull and tie together the folk of left bank and right bank, regardless of race, religion or politics.

The Rio Grande is no exception; rather, it stands as a fine exemplar of this situation. Moreover, it is an extremely individualistic river and a moody one. It floods, it dries up and it changes its course—cutting away Texas here and piling up an extra Coahuilan sandbar there; perhaps changing with the seasons the political allegiance of the handful of inhabitants of the shacks on a ragged island.

Like Paul Wellman's *Glory, God and Gold*, this is a narrative of Southwestern history which meanders and flows as freely as the Rio Grande itself (in a wet year). However, where Wellman's recent volume was a near-masterpiece of condensation, Horgan's great two-volume work, more than a thousand pages in length, is an exhaustive study of the *Rio Grande del Norte* and its people. Starting with the first drop of rain carried inland from the Gulf of Mexico, the author studies its history. He so completely immerses himself in the Pueblo Indian story that he sounds like an Amerindian himself. In a book which is quite poetic throughout, this section is particularly so.

As early as 1520, Spanish ships were lying off the mouth of the Rio Grande—then called the River of the Palms—and for four hundred years this muddy stream and its sprawling line of settlements and pueblos was in the line of march of drives from south and east.

The mirage of Quivira led Coronado to its banks; the lure of land brought Stephen Austin. The lust for glory bewitched Santa Anna, the cowardly and cruel opportunist, in its valley.

The area of the river was won by Oñate's followers in 1598, Spain's hungry soldiers "who gnawed on tradition when rations were low." Mr. Horgan does not subscribe to the

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Anglo-Saxon "black legend" and gives a fair picture of Spain's *Nuevo Mexico*. He makes clear the stakes in the struggle between soldiery and clergy for the souls of the natives. This internal wrangle so weakened the Spanish position that it was an invitation to rebellion. The bloody Pueblo revolts which followed were put down with strong right arms and Toledo steel more than anything else.

A number of Horgan's predecessors have overstressed the horse and the arquebus in the reduction of the fort-like pueblos. Horgan does not make this mistake. He places the credit on the great tradition (already a-dying, however) of the Spanish infantryman. On many occasions cold steel was not necessary and Vargas, by strength of will and mien alone, commanded bloodless surrenders.

Once re-established, Spain soon forgot her northernmost American provinces except for a brief response to French threats to Texas. With the independence of Mexico and the secularization of the missions, Texas-New Mexico was again neglected.

When the next threat came—from the expanding United States—it was already too late for Mexico effectively to block it. A pincers of Santa Fe mountain men and traders to the north and Texas settlers to the east began to close on the Rio Grande. Soon, in Texas and New Mexico, Mexicans found themselves strangers on their own soil.

Cross-river raiding finally resulted in Texan independence and statehood. The Mexican War formalized the pattern of westward expansion by the United States at the expense of Mexico. All the while, even until the Mexican Revolution of 1911, the separatist dream of a Republic of the Rio Grande simmered under an apparent quiescence, to break violently forth every generation or so.

In carrying his chronological narrative up to date, Mr. Horgan occasionally pauses to sketch in the fabulous characters who trod the river's banks (Armijo, Houston, Taylor) and spends many such interludes discussing the life of the people, their customs or their music.

The author spends little time on the post-Civil War Indian wars and the era of the badmen, in comparison to his treatment of earlier eras.

This is not a book to read through in a hurry or to dive into for scattered, hasty snatches of information. *Great River* should be read thoroughly in one more or less continuous "operation" or dipped into steadily and savored over a longer period of time.

This would make a wonderful gift, either in the standard boxed \$10

edition or in the limited edition, with full-color illustrations by the historian-poet-novelist-artist author (\$25).

Here is a massive work which is good history, perhaps better literature, and as a river "biography" a real *tour de force*. RICHARD H. DILLON

### Indictment is harsh

#### A HISTORY OF THE CRUSADES

By Steven Runciman. Vol. III: "The Kingdom of Acre." Cambridge. 530p. \$6.50

At last there is in English a complete and competent history of the Crusades. This final volume concludes the saga with the death of the crusader Pope, Pius II, in 1464. Mr. Runciman not only synthesizes the results of modern research, but through his extensive knowledge of world history and oriental languages, is able to present the Crusades in their international perspective. With equal facility and fascination he flashes to the West or the East from the Crusade states, from the court of a Henry III of England to that of the Great Khan Kubilai in China.

Though all the apparatus for the student is here in ample footnotes, in a list of original sources and modern studies, in a genealogical chart and cross-reference index, the book will reward anyone interested in the human drama of religious sacrifice and selfish ambition, bravery and cowardice, triumph and frustration. The author is skilled in succinct delineation of character and in analysis of complicated situations.

There is only one caution for the non-specialist. Probably to avoid endless footnote disputes or the use of qualifying phrases, the author does not warn us that some statements of fact are based upon only one source. But let professional historians quibble—the essential story is reliable.

Happily, this volume satisfies a desire aroused by the other two, for there is a good summary of the economic and artistic life in the Crusade states; the latter enhanced by the author's personal knowledge of the ruins in the Middle East. Unhappily, this otherwise excellent history concludes with "the summing up," wherein the author evaluates and moralizes on the results of the Crusades. It is a harsh indictment.

Throughout the volume Mr. Runciman distinguishes zealous religious crusaders from greedy merchants, uncontrolled fanatics and ambitious nobles, but most of the evils summarized here are charged against "the Crusades" as such. And "the Crusades were the Pope's work."

It seems idle to speculate upon how

## Good Reading for early 1955...

### FATIMA: IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

By Costa Brochado

Translated by George C. A. Boehrer

This study of the wonders of Fatima from a fresh perspective pieces together facts from Portuguese history to demonstrate how our Lady's appearances at Fatima strengthened the Faith in Portugal. \$4.50

### THE LIFE OF JOHN J. KEANE

By Rev. Patrick Henry Ahern

The first full-dimensional study of the life and work of Archbishop Keane, first rector of the Catholic University of America and key figure in the broiling 20th century, American Church controversies. Readers of such works as Ellis' *The Life of James Cardinal Gibbons* will find this another fascinating slice of Church history! \$6.50

### QUEEN ELIZABETH I (Abridged Edition)

By Theodore Maynard

Now available in popular form, this superb biography of "Good Queen Bess" was hailed (by *The Commonwealth*) as "a model of what the study of such a figure ought to be and seldom is—careful, scholarly, humorous, neatly written, refreshingly devoid of eloquence and frills." \$5.00

### A GUIDE TO CATHOLIC MARRIAGE

By Clement Simon Mihanovich,  
Brother Gerald J. Schnepf, S.M.,  
and John L. Thomas, S.J.

Especially sound Catholic teaching underlies this complete marriage guidebook for those who are or about to be married, and for priests, Sisters, and parents who need help in counseling. It covers every problem that an individual might face before and after marriage—from mate selection to the rearing of a family. \$4.50

### THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND YOU

By William J. Grace, S.J.

In brief and simple form, this new presentation of the essential teaching of the Church will prove invaluable as a private "refresher course" in the Faith, for clergy to use in their group instructions, and for teachers of Religion and Theology in high schools and colleges. \$1.90

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different the Arab world might have become and blame the crusades because it did not. There was little in the Arab world of pre-crusading days that gave promise of religious unity. And what assurance is there that a Moslem State founded on the sword, if by chance united and powerful, would not have brought the fall of Byzantium two or three centuries earlier? Since "the Islamic State was a theocracy whose political welfare depended on the Caliphate," could it not have produced another madman like the Hakim who, ninety years before the First Crusade, destroyed the church of the Holy Sepulchre?

It is with regret and shock that we read the final awful judgment that "the Holy War itself was nothing more than a long act of intolerance in the name of God, which is the sin against the Holy Ghost." And when the peace-loving, tolerant St. Francis went through the lines of the Fifth Crusaders to the Sultan's camp, he was "believing, as many other good and unwise persons before and after him have believed, that a peace mission can bring about peace!"

JOSEPH P. DONOVAN

#### SON OF OSCAR WILDE

By Vyvyan Holland. Dutton. 237p. \$3.75

The first thing to be noted about this book is that the author, the poet's younger son, is a man of intelligence, style and modesty. Therefore the sad story of the tragedy that disrupted Oscar Wilde's life and career, and cast a large shadow over his children's, is told sensitively and with no vindictive axe to grind.

Mr. Holland was born in 1886, his brother Cyril in 1885. They remembered their father (whom they never

saw again after the trial in 1895) as a "friendly giant" who loved to visit the nursery, telling them beautiful stories and playing bears and lions. After the trial they were spirited out of the country, their surname changed, and they were abjured to maintain complete silence about their identity.

Mr. Holland didn't discover until he was nineteen the real nature of his father's disgrace. By this time, he had been orphaned, attended a variety of schools, undergone great loneliness and entered the Church. Finally he established himself as a complete person with definite, objective norms, gentle humor and a great deal of perception.

Two particularly interesting points in the book are the fact that Oscar Wilde fell under Newman's spell while at Oxford—if his family had not so resolutely blocked his early interest in the Church, his whole life might have been different—and the totally different methods Cyril and Vyvyan used to emerge from the cloud of their parentage. Cyril's path led from athletics, school leadership, and a determined avoidance of anything suggesting enjoyment of esthetics to a military career and front-line death in World War I. Vyvyan experienced leanings toward the Jesuits and medicine, but went on to law, service in the war and a literary career.

*Son of Oscar Wilde* is also valuable as a new appendix to the life of one of the world's most brilliant playwrights and phrasemakers. Though some will no doubt read it expecting sensationalism (which is not there), all will find it a record of courage and sanity.

Two objections must be noted. Mr. Holland's regret at his early overprotection from contacts with his father (after 1895), his father's family and friends is understandable, but so is the

overprotection, for a minor. And the publisher's note, which lists the great men of history who have been guilty of Oscar Wilde's failing, and rather impassionedly suggests no punishment because the fault "is not unique," is a sour and uncalled-for note.

KATHERINE GRINNELL

#### THE VIEW FROM THE PARSONAGE

Sheila Kaye-Smith. Harper. 277p. \$3.50

The Rev. Henry Chamberlin's great joy as Rector of Palster-in-Ebony was the opportunities it gave him for reading and study. His interest in the history of the place was one of the big things he had in common with his patron; the bond of like tastes helped to withstand the pull of conflicting philosophies.

Moreover, Chamberlin was a tempering man, who considered a clergyman to be "just one gentleman among others, with the same social obligations and taboos." This explained how he could spend most of a lifetime in close friendship with Adam Cryall, squire of the manor and one-time Anglican minister turned agnostic, and make no serious effort to bring him back to his lost faith. Religion, unless handled very lightly, was one of the taboos.

The Rector's tale of his fifty years incumbency, *The View from the Parsonage*, centers around Adam, "the good man without God," and Adam's daughters, for whom rationalism and ethics were not enough. Adam had the background of Christian morality to direct his life as a free-thinker—"God did his work in him without his knowing it."

Adam's sensitive younger daughter, finding only emptiness in the agnostic's creed of natural goodness without theism, experienced, through spiritualism, a brief ecstasy of faith, only to see it vanish in bitter disillusionment. Henry Chamberlin witnessed the joy and the anguish, but shirked his responsibilities toward them. "I was too pusillanimous," he admits, reflecting on how Adam Cryall would

The Viking Press has written us of its pleasure in Rev. Louis F. Doyle's article on The Love Letters of Phyllis McGinley (Dec. 18) but asked that we carry a word of caution about the final paragraph, which referred to quoting from the poems. They point out that the use of excerpts in Fr. Doyle's review or in other reviews is entirely justifiable but, if any other use of these copyright poems is proposed, permission must be sought from the publishers.

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have reacted to any support, given his daughter's faith.

Blanche, the older girl, was another story. Sure in her liberalism, she tried to force life to meet her terms, first in her disastrous marriage to one of "Uncle Harry's" churchwardens, then in her liaison with a Catholic friend. A sense of sin came slowly; her code of honor, with no Christian preconceptions to sustain it, found nothing dishonorable in her love affair, and rationalism justified her fight against her lover's beliefs. Doubt began when she saw that in killing faith she had destroyed the man as well.

For the first step toward truth and the cleansing miracle of baptism, Blanche had "Uncle Harry" to thank. For once, in his cautious relationship with the Cryall family, he had faced an issue of faith instead of side-stepping it. That Blanche found the Church of Rome instead of that of England brought only a minor pang to the rector. Sincere man of God, albeit sometimes a weak one, he was profoundly grateful for God's gift to Blanche. MARJORIE HOLLIGAN

## LIFE WITH GROUCHO

By Arthur Marx. Simon & Schuster. 310p. \$3.50

## TREADMILL TO OBLIVION

By Fred Allen. Little, Brown. 240p. \$4

There were five Marx brothers, the sons of Sam and Minnie Marx. And if they are now scarcely known as Leonard, Arthur, Julius, Milton, Herbert, but, respectively, as Chico, Harpo, Groucho, Gummo, Zeppo, a monologist named Art Fisher is to blame. Groucho is the middle man of the five in order of appearance; he is the talker (irrepressible) and the saver of his income. He is, also, the longest-lasting professionally, his popular TV stint on "You Bet Your Life" leaving him quite comfortable after taxes.

His son by the first of three marriages—the first ending in divorce after some twenty years, the others of much shorter duration—writes a properly filial biography of his famous sharp-witted and acid-tongued father. It is amusing and superficial, but manages to portray the subject with some between-the-lines revelation.

Another humorist and comedian of stage and radio, who is wittier and, to my taste, funnier than Groucho, writes, in *Treadmill to Oblivion*, his own story of a fight to survive and preserve some integrity amid the hot-

tentots of hucksterdom. The book is not, by any means, an autobiography. It is rather something of a blow-by-blow account of Allen's Adventures in the Blunderland of airborne advertising, where vice presidents and the urgency boys team up with the rating rabbits in one of the maddest tea parties of modern times. And the account is wry-on-the-rocks with a good dash of satire, served with samples of scripts as documentation.

It is a pity that the agencies who rule that we are destined to hear and see on radio and TV have not been able to find something "right" for Mr. Allen and his shrewdly cockeyed view of human foibles, which always had something warm about it, too.

R. F. GRADY

JOHN LAFARGE, S.J., associate editor of *AMERICA*, has written extensively on the racial problem.

RICHARD H. DILLON is on the review staff of the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

MARJORIE HOLLIGAN is active in Critic's Forum Book discussions.

JOSEPH P. DONOVAN, S.J., is professor of history at Seattle University, Washington.

## THE WORD

*Jesus answered her, Nay, woman, why dost thou trouble Me with that? My time has not come yet. And His Mother said to the servants, Do whatever He tells you (John 2:4-5; Gospel for second Sunday after Epiphany).*

If Catholics were asked, haphazard, to name two individual miracles performed by Christ our Lord, how would the majority answer? To this stimulating conundrum (which interested religion teachers might test by abruptly proposing the question to their pupils) we beg leave to offer, by way of tentative response, a mere conjecture. Most people would name the miracle of the loaves and fishes and the one at the wedding in Cana.

If our guess be correct, then the answer becomes almost more interesting than the question. Why do we remember best the wonders which deal with a lack of food and a shortage of wine?

Good Catholics could respond with ease to this last prejudicial and shal-

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low query. We remember the miracle of the loaves because of the Eucharist, which it symbolized. We remember the miracle of the wine because of Mary, who asked for it.

How strange and how significant it is that, as often as we read John's account of the wonder at the wedding, we simply cannot become accustomed to it! Always we experience the same surprise that the Mother of God should have grown concerned over a trifling embarrassment. Always we listen in mute astonishment to her brief, quiet, factual statement to her Son: *They have no wine left*. What did our Lady mean? What did she expect—she, who, until this moment, had never seen her Son do any superhuman deed?

Always, too, as we consider this Gospel, we fail almost completely to smother our sense of uneasy distress as we read the strange reply of this peerless Son to this priceless Mother: *Nay, woman, why dost thou trouble Me with that? My time has not come yet*.

Of course, our shock at this puzzling behavior of Christ our Lord is due in part to regrettably misunderstood trifles. It is difficult for us moderns to accept equably that ancient title of respect which our Saviour employs, and which ought to be translated *My Lady*; we can hardly be expected to

understand that by this same title Antony used to address Cleopatra. We stumble, too, over the distinctly Semitic idiom with which Christ would seem to shrug off His Mother's observation about the wine. *What is that to us?* says our Lord easily, *Why bother about that?*

Still, it cannot be denied that in any language the clear statement which next follows may rightly give us pause: *My time has not come yet*. The matter would seem to be thus settled. Whatever Mary asked for has been refused: the time has not come for that sort of thing.

We are given pause indeed. Very brief pause, as we immediately listen to our Lady cheerfully instructing the waiters, *Do whatever He tells you*. There is no getting round the big, solid fact that whatever negation we understand Christ to offer His wonderful and quite determined Mother, she understood no such thing. Perhaps we are distinctly shocked, but Mary is clearly pleased. We naturally thought that Christ had refused His Mother something. She naturally knew that He had granted her something.

Well, then: what about the meticulous time-scheme for the entire sublime work of redemption? Didn't our Lord just say that the time for mir-

acles had not yet come? Yes. Our Saviour made that remark when Mary merely gossiped, as it were, about the shortage of wine. When He answered her—smiling, of course, at her great earnestness and delighting in her great love for everyone—she surely stood for a moment and gave Jesus her long, level, mother's look. She *looked* her request. And at that moment the time for miracles had arrived: when Mary asked for one.

It is difficult to understand why anyone should be upset or even surprised when we Catholics joyfully call Mary *the Omnipotent Suppliant*.

VINCENT P. MCCORRY, S.J.

## THEATRE

WHAT EVERY WOMAN KNOWS, while some of its bloom has been lost, is still an interesting theatre-piece when performed by a capable cast. As the lead-off production of the Winter Festival at New York City Center, its performance has been intrusted to such versatile veterans of the stage as John Cromwell, Kent Smith, Philip Bourneuf and Viola

# MARY and Modern Man

Edited by THOMAS J. M. BURKE, S.J.

FIRST PRINTING: . . . ., 1954  
SECOND PRINTING: . . . ., 1955

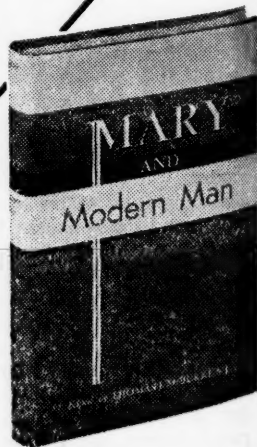
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Roache, and the volatile young actress, Betsy Von Furstenberg. As icing on the cake, New York City Center Theatre Company presents, starred as Maggie Wylie—Drums, please; Trumpets!—Helen Hayes!

In her portrayal of Maggie Wylie Miss Hayes is giving the best performance of her career. Miss Hayes is the kind of actress, however, who always gives her best performance in whatever role she is playing. And her best is superlative.

The production was directed by John Stix. Settings and lights, in order mentioned, are accredited to John Koenig and Fedor. Grace Houston selected the period costumes. Sans sets, sans lights, sans costumes—the glowing portrayal of Maggie by Miss Hayes would have made a most distinguished production of Barrie's charming and thoughtful domestic comedy.

**FREE ADVERTISEMENT.** Since City Center Theatre Company is a non-profitmaking corporation, devoted to enriching the cultural life of the metropolis of the Western World, the following advance publicity is gratis, provided that it escapes the watchful eye of the business manager.

*The Fourposter*, starring Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn, will follow the Barrie play in the Winter Festival. After *The Fourposter*, Franchot Tone will be starred in *The Time of Your Life*. In the concluding production, Helen Hayes—Hooray!—will be starred in *The Wisteria Trees*.

**PORTRAIT OF A LADY**, presented at ANTA Theatre by Lyn Austin and Thomas Noyes, is a thoughtful drama by William Archibald, boiled down from a novel by Henry James. Most of the characters are expatriate Americans living in self-imposed exile in England and Italy in the latter third of the 19th century. They are a sorry lot, for the most part, apparently living on dividends earned in the United States. The play has a heavy tincture of irony, and its moral seems to be that the surest way to ruin a man is to make it possible for him to do as he pleases.

In the present instance it happens to be a woman who is handed a blank check. She is a high-spirited girl, buoyantly played by Jennifer Jones, who wants a fling at life before she settles down. She wants to see the natural beauty of the world as well as its art, she wants adventure and association with men of wisdom and whatever else life has to offer. "I want a swift ride in the night," she says, "with four horses over a road I cannot see."

A young man who loves her divides his inheritance with her, making it easy for her to do as she will, go where she wants. Almost immediately she proceeds to make a mess of her life by embarking on a disastrous marriage with a reluctant fortune-hunter.

William and Jean Eckart designed two elegant sets for the production. Cecil Eaton's period costumes, especially those worn by the female characters, suggest social poise and good living. José Quintero directed the play at a pace suitable for the theatregoers who do not confuse dramatic action with physical movement.

The play failed to pass the Broadway intelligence test, however, apparently because the producers forgot that only a tiny minority of the New York audience, as popular preferences in drama would indicate, has ever read a book by any author more profound than Damon Runyon. The result of this forgetfulness was the closing of the production after four performances, while the glowing acting of Jennifer Jones and her supporting cast evaporated in aromatic memories.

THEOPHILUS LEWIS

## FILMS

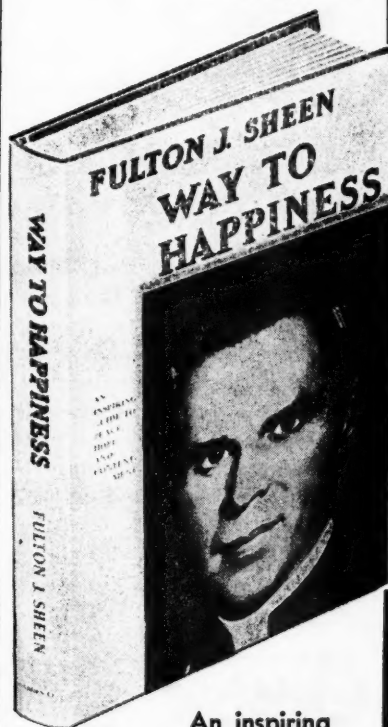
**GATE OF HELL.** The postwar Japanese film industry has exported three extraordinarily interesting movies, bizarre in content but made with a high degree of artistry and technical excellence. This third one is the most attractive of the lot, not only because it artfully uses color (*Rashomon* and *Ugetsu* were black-and-white) to make individual scenes resemble Japanese prints, but also because its story, though strange to western minds, is quite moving.

Actually, in telling a story of medieval Japan, the film's producers have an enormous advantage over occidental audiences. Lacking any precise background knowledge by which to judge the movie's premises, the audience is likely, rightly or wrongly, to measure the validity and significance of its content by the same yardstick that acknowledges its technical superiority.

The story of *Gate of Hell* concerns a warrior (Kasuo Hasagawa) who, for his part in quelling a palace revolt, is offered any reward he requests. He asks, not knowing that she is married, for the hand of a young woman (Michiko Kyo) whom he encountered when she risked her life to save the Empress. No other reward will satisfy

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**SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES** III

the man and no one seems to regard her marriage as an insuperable obstacle. The wife is forced, therefore, to a lonely and drastic sacrificial act to save her honor and her husband's life.

Whether this is an accurate reflection of a culture remote in time and place or merely contrived melodrama I do not know. In any case, for *adults* the picture's manners and customs and style of acting are fascinating to watch. And its preoccupation with wifely fidelity and with sin and repentance gives it an emotional impact precluded by the cynical tone of the earlier Japanese films.

(Harrison and Davidson)

ANIMAL FARM is advertised as the first feature-length cartoon with a grown-up theme. The theme, based on George Orwell's allegorical novel, is an exposition of one of the most pertinent and least disputed facts of contemporary life: the greater tyranny produced by successful revolution. It is indeed the unimpeachability of the film's theme which ultimately operates against its complete success.

British cartoonists John Halas and Joy Batchelor have captured very well and sometimes with striking dramatic and visual effect the essentials of Orwell's fable—the farm animals revolt against and depose the drunken and incompetent farmer Brown, only to find themselves victimized by a totalitarian regime set up by the pigs under the slogan of equality for all.

The artists, however, have not managed to project anything much in the way of fresh or particular insights. Without these the doleful and by this time oft-told tale does not pack the wallop it should. For thoughtful *family* audiences the film is worth-while, but as a technical more than as an ideological triumph.

(Louis De Rochemont Associates)

HUNTERS OF THE DEEP is an admirably photographed and edited documentary about marine life. A record of the variously beautifully, ominous, bizarre and funny aspects of the undersea world, it was compiled from film brought back from three scientific expeditions. It is blessedly devoid of the phony melodramatic suspense which usually finds its way into documentaries intended for commercial distribution. Notable also is its informative, non-smart-alecky commentary, well-delivered by Dan O'Herlihy. Even so, except for scientifically minded members of the *family*, sixty minutes is a long time to spend among the sharks, manta rays and sea anemones.

(Distributors Corp. of America)  
MOIRA WALSH

## LETTERS

### Vanish quietly, please

EDITOR: Can't something be done to make discussions about the vanishing Irish vanish? I have carefully checked the writings of that great Irish theologian and philosopher, St. Thomas Macquinas, and I cannot find a single indication that there is something so intrinsically superior about the Irish soul as to warrant all of this extraordinary interest.

If the Irish vanish, I suspect the world and the Church will continue to exist. And if the Irish multiply and fill the earth, maybe Notre Dame will find a good Irish quarterback instead of being forced to rely on fine Catholic gentlemen like Ralph Guglielmi.

EDWARD J. BRENNAN  
South Bend, Ind.

### Russian studies

EDITOR: In the Jan. 1 AMERICA Peter Beach outlines a situation which has needed stating for some time. Knowing somewhat of the investigation which went into the preparation of his statement, I congratulate him.

However, I may be permitted to add one or two items from the administrator's point of view. Selling a Russian studies program even to willing university authorities already plagued with financial deficits is not an easy one. Anyone even slightly acquainted with the history of Soviet and East European programs in American universities knows that such programs had their beginnings and continued support in generous foundation grants. Such grants have not been thus far available for Russian studies programs in Catholic universities.

The fact that there is a need in our Catholic universities to consider the problems in this field from more than merely the political or economic viewpoint is, I think, clear enough. The opposition which the Soviet regime has shown to Catholicism, especially wherever the Reds gained control, is surely not built on the fear of the "Pope's divisions."

It is strongly to be hoped that Mr. Beach's article will serve to call attention to this great need and to interest those who might be in a position to advance this work in Catholic institutions of higher learning.

(REV.) W. C. JASKIEWICZ, S.J.  
Director, Institute of  
Contemporary Russian Studies  
Fordham University  
New York, N. Y.

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